



Oregon

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14 Trask River High School seniors to receive diplomas Saturday

Wearing traditional caps and gowns, 14 seniors will receive Trask River High School diplomas Saturday in what is only the school's second commencement ceremony.

Commencement speakers will encourage the graduates. Friends and family will applaud them. And the graduates will enjoy the pride of an achievement some of them never anticipated.

“Many of these youth came to us with few if any high school credits,” said Tracie Hightower, superintendent of the Tillamook Youth Correctional Facility, where the high school is located. “They have distinguished themselves by focusing on their studies and preparing to return to the community as productive, crime-free citizens.”

Speakers at the morning ceremony will be Hightower and Randy Schild, Tillamook School District superintendent. Trask River is a fully accredited high school operated by the Tillamook district through a contract with the Oregon Department of Education. It is one of nine high schools in Oregon Youth Authority close-custody facilities statewide.

Students in the Class of 2012 are the first who were required to demonstrate their proficiency in reading before earning a diploma; state requirements in writing and math will be phased in during the next two years. In addition to Trask River High School's secondary students, an average of 10 students are enrolled each term in

online Portland Community College classes. Tillamook Bay Community College has been instrumental in connecting Tillamook YCF youth with PCC.

This will be only the second commencement at Trask River High. Until last year, seniors were awarded diplomas as they earned them with no formal ceremony.

Across OYA last year, one in seven youth in close-custody facilities earned high school diplomas. Research shows an inverse relationship between educational attainment and criminal behavior. School achievement by youth helps fulfill OYA's mission to protect the public and reduce crime by holding youth offenders accountable and providing opportunities for reformation in safe environments.

OYA has custody of approximately 750 youth ages 12-24 in correctional and transitional facilities in Albany, Burns, Florence, Grants Pass, La Grande, Salem, Tillamook, Warrenton and Woodburn. OYA juvenile probation and parole officers supervise an additional 1,050 youth on probation and parole in communities throughout Oregon.

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